

CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD

1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300

Sacramento, CA 95825

www.chrb.ca.gov

(916) 263-6000 Fax (916) 263-6042

**Postmortem Examination Review Summary #051**

Horse Information: 8-year-old Thoroughbred.

Incident Summary: This horse displayed signs of colic in the afternoon. The owner contacted his veterinarian (who was unavailable at the time) then administered oral Gastrogard and a partial dose of oral flunixin meglumine. When the veterinarian attended to the horse 1 hour later, he administered flunixin meglumine intravenously and instructed the owner to walk the horse. The following morning the horse was still displaying signs of colic with a very distended abdomen and few gut sounds. The veterinarian administered detomidine, butorphanol, and buscopan IV, and passed a nasogastric tube to administer bismuth subsalicylate and oil. The horse went down in the stall and the owner was very troubled by the level of pain the horse displayed. Referral was not an option due to financial constraints. On re-evaluation the horse did not improve and was euthanized with pentobarbital.

Necropsy Summary: The cause of the colic was not evident on necropsy examination. The colon had focal serosal hemorrhages along the mesenteric margin, however the significance is unknown. The microscopic examination identified subtle and unspecific changes in the gastrointestinal tract (diffuse, mild to moderate lymphoplasmacytic enterocolitis with edema). No parasite eggs were detected on fecal examination. Common infectious causes of colic were ruled out (Negative for *C. perfringens* and *C. difficile* toxins), triggering the possibility of a displacement that resolved itself postmortem during transportation of the horse to the lab.

Racing/Training History: This horse was used to pony (escort) racehorses to the track. The horse was fed alfalfa, timothy hay and a pelleted "Senior" feed. There were no recent feed changes, and the horse maintained its body weight well. The horse occasionally received phenylbutazone when worked hard. The horse did not have any prior colic episodes nor other health conditions.

Veterinary History Summary: N/A

Pre-race Examinations: N/A

Conclusion: Financial constraint was the reason this horse was euthanized at the track instead of being referred for further supportive care, pain management, and surgical correction if deemed appropriate. If financial help were available, the outcome could have been different. Financial assistance is being offered to racehorse owners for salvage procedures (surgical arthrodesis) to be performed after catastrophic injury of the proximal sesamoid bones. In this horse's situation (colic), referral could likely have led to full recovery and return to the previous level of work. A well-mannered, sound, and healthy 'pony' horse is extremely important at the racetrack, and their value should not be underestimated.